

2009 Iowa Rabies Summary

ANIMAL RABIES IN IOWA:

In 2009, 35 cases of animal rabies were reported in Iowa, which is a slight increase from 2008 (see the Table 1 below). Rabies was identified most frequently in wildlife species including 13 skunks, 11 bats, and one squirrel. Five cases were diagnosed in domestic species including 3 cats and 2 dogs. Five cows tested positive.

Table 1: Positive Rabies Cases 2001-2009

Species	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	Total
Bat	31	27	47	47	60	28	13	11	11	275
Skunk	28	27	38	28	33	13	5	7	13	192
Cat	10	7	8	11	5	7	7	9	3	67
Cow	10	12	3	10	7	4	0	1	5	52
Dog	2	3	6	3	2	2	5	1	2	26
Horse	3	2	3	0	1	3	1	0	0	13
Fox	1	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
Squirrel	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	1
Badger	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Total	85	78	106	100	108	57	31	29	35	629

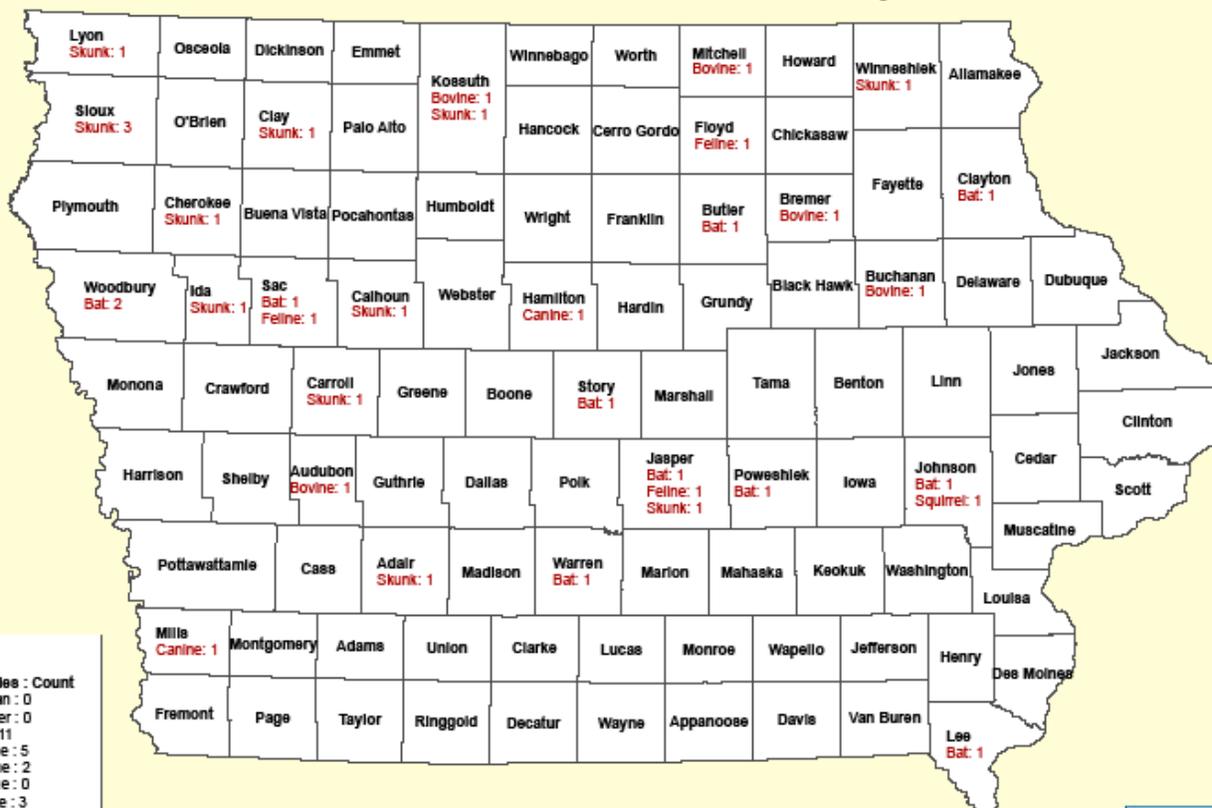
During 2009, 1694 animals in Iowa were tested for rabies and 35 were confirmed positive (2.07%). The percent positive varies greatly by species, see the Table 2 below. It is important to note that this data is greatly influenced by the number of animals tested. Many animals are tested because they exhibit unusual behavior or clinical signs making them more likely to be infected with the rabies virus. For these reasons, the percentages should not be considered representative of the true distribution of disease within the animal population in Iowa.

Table 2: Percent Positive by Species in 2009

Species	Positive	Total Tested	% Positive
Dogs	2	369	0.54%
Cows	5	86	5.81%
Cats	3	444	0.68%
Bat	11	558	1.97%
Squirrel	1	17	5.88%
Skunks	13	39	33.33%

There are two rabies strains that commonly circulate in Iowa (bat and skunk), and many different species can be infected with these strains. In animal samples that are strongly positive for rabies (the strain typing procedure is only effective in samples that are strongly positive as opposed to weakly positive), the University Hygienic Laboratory (UHL) can differentiate the rabies strain that infected the animal. In 2009, UHL was able to identify the rabies strain in 16 of the 35 positive rabies cases, 10 were skunk strain and 6 were bat strain. Skunk strain rabies was identified in 6 skunks, 3 cows, and 1 cat. Bat strain rabies was identified in 5 bats and 1 squirrel.

2009 Iowa Rabies Map



Species : Count
 Human : 0
 Badger : 0
 Bat : 11
 Bovine : 5
 Canine : 2
 Equine : 0
 Feline : 3
 Fox : 0
 Skunk : 13
 Squirrel : 1
 Total : 35

Source: Iowa Department of Public Health, Center for Acute Disease Epidemiology



Updated: 1/27/10

HUMAN RABIES IN IOWA:

Iowa's most recent human rabies case occurred in 2002. The illness was caused by the bat strain. Prior to that, the last reported case occurred in 1951.

While the exact number of people who receive rabies post exposure prophylaxis each year in the United States is unknown, it is estimated to be about 40,000 people. Based upon Iowa's population, that would equate to approximately 390 Iowan's receiving preventative treatment each year.